

MINUTES OF THE WOODSIDE TOWN MEETING

AUGUST 21, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Mayor Mike Warren. He welcomed all 19 attendees. A written agenda was followed. Attendees were asked to sign in and provide either a mailing address or email address, as some of the recent newsletters were returned for incorrect addresses.

Mike Warren announced that the town Charter was updated effective July 1st and wished to review some of the important changes. He stated that the Mayor's position and all Council members' terms have all been changed to two years. The reason for this was because the important projects that the Council has had to work on recently involved more time and having the Mayor's term curtailed after one year would greatly affect getting projects done. This change in term length gives more work time to get things done.

The number of Council Members has been reduced from 5 to 4, which is consistent with other small towns, who may have difficulty getting enough people to fill the council seats. We are now at this number, having lost Aaron Mantz with his moving out of town.

The town is now eligible for the Realty Transfer Tax fee of 1.5%, when a home sells. We have lost much money over the years, by not having this information in our previous charter. Currently, we have two homes in town up for sale, so their income from this tax will be very beneficial to the town.

The annexation process has been established – however, we cannot approve any annexation until the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is approved by the State and adopted by the Town Council. There are a few things to finish up on the CLP but the end is in sight. There were three attendees at the meeting who wished to obtain more information on the annexation process, as they wish to pursue this course with their properties, which are partly in Woodside and partly in Kent County. Brenda Richards stated she would review the annexation process and put it in a step-by-step procedure, which would be more easily understood and get it to them all.

The Grier family stated they may wish to subdivide their property as Mike Warren advised them that they must have separate land parcels to build an additional home on the site. He stated that the town could possibly be flexible on the variances to manage some of the building requirements they need.

Mike also reviewed that the Election Process has been clarified in the new Charter and is now in line with the Kent County requirements, which will ease the confusion when we have an election.

With the new Charter, it is in writing that we can fine property owners up to \$500 if they do not comply with the town ordinances and keeping their properties safe and cleaned up. The new Charter and current town ordinances are now on the town website. Letters have been sent out to three property owners already about cleaning up their properties. The council feels that those property owners would have to totally ignore our requests before we get to the fine process. The council has determined that the fine, when incurred, would be added to the person's tax bill, if it is not paid outright. This may force the issue of having a lien on the property. Paul Davis stated that a lien doesn't alleviate the problem as someone could stay there till they died and the issue wouldn't be resolved. Rene Valladares stated that the way the council is doing it shows a process that we can fall back on with proof, by the letters that have been written. Mike Warren stated that he and Brenda Richards are meeting with the Director of the Kent County Code Enforcement and Inspection Agency on Thursday to discuss either hiring a constable or using the County's Code Enforcement agents to help enforce our ordinances.

We were notified that there will be construction on Willow Grove Road, from August 22 to October 31st, which will affect the town as most of the traffic will be diverted through Dundee Road. We plan on having increased state police presence and radar monitoring during that time.

Trash companies have developed new rules pertaining to trash pick-up. All trash must be in the appropriate cans, such as recyclables only in the recycling can. Trash in bags on the ground will not be picked up – everything must be in the cans. For more information, property owners should contact their trash provider.

Mike Warren stated that he has met with Ann Gravatt and Paul Moser of DelDot about the Street Paving Project and Sidewalk along Main Street. Mike stated that the current plan is to run a sidewalk from Steeles Ridge Road to Upper King Road, along one side and use 40 inches of the actual road to put in the sidewalk design. Electric poles won't have to be moved at all. Discussion also centered on having a slight gradual "speed bump" in front of the town hall, the Methodist church and the post office to slow traffic down a little. The design may be ready by December 2018 and will be in line with the street paving project that is scheduled. A public meeting will be held to discuss the process before anything happens. The sidewalk will be all paid for by the grants we have obtained from our state representatives. The old sidewalks will be torn up and lawns reseeded. The new sidewalk may not happen for 1 -1 ½ years and will then be the responsibility of the property owners to maintain.

Patti Virdin mentioned that a "Sink hole" has developed in front of her home on Main Street and DelDot apparently has put a white circle around it, but she is not sure if anything will be done about it. Mike stated that he will check on it and follow up on getting it fixed.

Stephanie Holyfield gave the Treasurer's Report: Currently, we have \$17,156 in the Checking Account; \$10,000 in the form of a CD; and \$4,403 in the Municipal Street Aid Fund. Mike advised the attendees that the funding we are receiving from the State for the Street lights is not sufficient and the town is having to put in about \$1000 each year to cover the deficit. Mike and Stephanie met with Karen Morton at the State Finance Office to complete the latest MSA Fund application and found that the funding is determined by our town census and the amount of private road we are responsible for.

A handout of the proposed Budget was available to everyone to review. Mike stated that the taxes for Woodside have not been increased in over 30 years and our tax rate is well below any other town, which Sharon Ivory, Tax Collector, agreed on. Mike reminded everyone that when the town survey was done last year that the majority of respondents agreed to a tax increase of some sort in order to keep our town's finances above water. The town council tried not to be out of line and hopes that the increase will not be an undue hardship for people. One consideration may be a tax break for Senior Citizens – we will have to see how Kent County deals with this and may consider a change in that in the future. Sharon Ivory stated that she has received the tax list for this year and the tax bills will be coming out in the next two weeks. Taxes are due October 31st. She stated that if there is a problem with paying it all at once, to pay what you can and then the 1% penalty on the rest won't be overwhelming. It was asked if the Tax Rates of other towns could be put on our town website, so people could see how we compare with other towns – Brenda stated she would work on that.

Mike stated that we have many issues with the Town Hall, which we rent out regularly. It is in need of repairs and currently is the only thing that makes money for the town. We need to hire someone to fix the back door, repair the flooring and clean the town hall, so we can continue to rent it out.

Diane Crom, Council member, is working with the Historical Society, and asked if anyone has old photos or information on the history of the town to please contact her. Dorothy Grier, who was present, was asked if she might have any photos about the town, since she has lived here for so many years.

There being no further questions or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes by: Brenda Richards, Town Secretary